

Energy Independence

Our energy policies play a key role in the health of our economy and the quality of life in our nation, and should be formed through an open, deliberative process. To this end, I have taken an active role in establishing the Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition (SEEC) in the House of Representatives. SEEC is working to ensure that the House considers legislation that will address our energy needs while also creating millions of new, clean energy jobs, makes America more energy independent and secure, and addresses global climate change.

With only 3% of the known oil reserves in the world, the United States cannot become energy independent or measurably affect the world price of oil simply by drilling more within our borders. We can do so, however, by calling upon the same sense of destiny and confidence in our technological talent upon which President Kennedy relied upon to take us to the Moon and develop alternative energy sources.

Comprehensive reform of our energy policies is needed, and during my time in Congress I have pursued a legislative agenda that bolsters federal efforts to encourage energy conservation, as well as research and development of renewable energy sources. I believe that we need a bold new vision for our energy policies, one which unleashes American ingenuity and talent to create a new clean energy economy in which the United States will regain its rightful place as a world leader; moves us toward energy independence; addresses our global warming challenges; and equips President Obama with the tools he needs to negotiate an effective international greenhouse gas emissions agreement that includes the developing economies of such countries as China and India.

American Clean Energy and Security Act

In May of 2009, House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Henry Waxman (D-CA) and Energy and Environment Subcommittee Chairman Ed Markey (D-MA) introduced the [American Clean Energy and Security Act](#) (H.R. 2454). This comprehensive energy and climate bill will create millions of new clean energy jobs, enhance America's energy independence, and protect the environment.

I joined a number of other members of SEEC in sending a letter to Chairman Waxman and Chairman Markey recommending that this energy package direct investments to wide range of solutions to provide for our energy needs and protect our environment. Development of improved solar, wind, biomass, and carbon capture and sequestration (CCS) from fossil fuel generation technologies will help to provide solutions for a twenty-first century American economy, and I am pleased that the bill includes a number of our recommendations.

The current version of this legislation requires electric utilities to meet 20% of their electricity demand through renewable energy sources and energy efficiency by 2020; invests in new clean energy technologies and energy efficiency, including energy efficiency and renewable energy, carbon capture and sequestration, electric and other advanced technology vehicles, and basic scientific research and development; mandates new energy-saving standards for buildings, appliances, and industry; reduces carbon emissions from major U.S. sources by 17% by 2020, and over 80% by 2050 compared to 2005 levels. Complementary measures in the legislation, such as investments in preventing tropical deforestation, will achieve significant additional reductions in carbon emissions; and protect consumers from energy price increases.

I have some concerns about aspects of the bill that I feel were weakened in the course of negotiations within the Energy and Commerce Committee and with other House committees, such as the renewable energy standard and the maintenance of Clean Air Act regulatory authority, which you can read more about in this [op-ed](#) I recently wrote that was published in the San Francisco Chronicle

Global Warming Education Act

I am also working with Chairmen Waxman and Markey, along with Education and Labor Committee Chairman George Miller (D-CA) and Science and Technology Committee Chairman Bart Gordon (D-TN) to include provisions in the bill to strengthen the nation's global warming education program. These provisions would be modeled on my [Global Warming Education Act](#) (H.R. 1926) but would seek to include all federal agencies with an interest in global warming education, including NSF, NOAA, NASA, the Department of Energy, EPA, and others. You can read more about the Global Warming Education Act [here](#).

Field Hearing on Renewable Energy

On August 2, 2006, I held an Energy Subcommittee Field Hearing with Chairwoman Judy Biggert at the San Jose, CA City Hall Council Chambers. The hearing addressed the potential of renewable energy technologies to reduce dependence on foreign energy sources, lower the cost of energy to consumers and boost American international competitiveness. Five experts in the field testified at the hearing:

- Dr. Steven Chu , the current Secretary of Energy. At the time of the hearing, Dr. Chu served as Director of the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. He is the 1997 Nobel Prize winner in Physics.
- Dr. Arno Penzias , Venture Partner with New Enterprise Associates in Palo Alto, CA. While at Bell Laboratories he won the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1978. Today he is a venture capitalist with interests in renewable energy technologies.
- Christian Larsen , Vice President for Generation for the Electric Power Research Institute in Palo Alto, CA. His division provides data on cost and performance analyses and for renewable, distributed, and hydropower energy generation technologies to the electricity industry.
- David Pearce , President and CEO of Miasolé, a Santa Clara, CA based company that manufactures industrial-scale solar products using thin film solar cell technology developed in Department of Energy national laboratories.
- Ron Swenson , cofounder of ElectroRoof, a solar equipment installation company, and EcoSage, an educational services company developing a program to build solar-powered satellite teaching centers in remote areas of the world in conjunction with solar education programs in schools.

You can view the [webcast of the hearing](#) . To read the hearing charter and complete texts of witness testimony, please visit the [U.S. House Committee on Science](#)

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California : A leader in energy conservation

I also believe that the rest of the nation must follow California's lead in the area of [energy conservation](#)

. These efforts must be replicated and supported at the federal level by giving more grants and incentives to state and local governments and schools who undertake energy efficiency, conservation and alternative fuels programs. We must also strive to make our vehicles more fuel efficient, which will help reduce our dependence on fossil fuels. I am encouraged that President Obama has moved to

[increase fuel economy standards](#)

for vehicles and supported efforts to make homes, businesses, and government more energy efficient.

Democratization of Energy

I believe that the promotion of renewable energy and energy conservation can be good not only for the United States, but also for poor people in developing countries. For the poorest countries, energy is a source of their poverty. 38 of the poorest countries are net importers of oil, and 25 of them import all of their oil. The top recipients under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative are spending the money saved from debt relief on the increasing price of oil rather than on educating their kids, fighting HIV/AIDS, providing clean water, or increasing access to health care. Approximately 2 billion people worldwide are left without reliable energy sources, without refrigeration, without basic communication, heat, or even light because of the high cost and inaccessibility of fossil fuels.

I believe in the concept of “Democratization of Energy” through which we can use renewable energy to put control in the in the hands of the people, not in the hands of multinational corporations or dictators, which will help to realize revolutions in political systems, standards of living, and environmental protection.

Read my remarks from the [International Conference on Renewable Energy for Developing Countries](#)